



Wisconsin E-Brief for Partnership Schools

May 2014

An e-newsletter from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
to promote family-school-community partnerships for children's learning

Five Ideas to "Power-Up" Parent Meetings

The time that parents and teachers spend together is precious and fleeting, so why not make meetings as learning-focused, child-centered, and productive as possible?

The following are a few ideas that send powerful messages to parents about the important role they play in their children's academic success, and simple but effective learning strategies parents can use at home.

- 1. Turn your next School Open House into a Grade-Level Parent Meeting.** Grade-level parent meetings can inform parents about what their child is learning in each class, show them where their children's achievements fall in specific skills, and equip them with detailed strategies about how to help at home. View a user-ready [PowerPoint](#) and [handouts](#) on the DPI Title I Parent Involvement [webpage](#).
- 2. Hold "structured conversations" with parents** by classroom or grade level during professional development days, literacy nights, open house nights, or other school events. Structured conversations are a powerful way to form a partnership to improve student learning which can be done in an hour. View a video and outline at <http://ctschoollparentcompact.org/learning-conversation/>.
- 3. Host a series of weekly parent workshops** that invite parents to positively interact with their child, talk personally with the teacher and principal about their child's learning, and take a field trip to a university. Read more about [Helping Maximize Children's Learning](#).
- 4. Sponsor a Supporting Student Success Workshop** for families. View a [guide from the National PTA](#), as well as other guides for hosting family-friendly events to celebrate culture, boosting math and literacy, and other topics.
- 5. Explore the pathway to college with families.** A "[Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning](#)" workshop guide takes middle and high school students and families through the thought process. Or, see a "[College Day](#)" planning guide for elementary students and families.
- 6. Build family-centered learning practices for after school programs.** Explore concrete, research-based strategies for creating or expanding family engagement in [after-school activities](#).

New Family Engagement Resources Span the School Year

From the DPI Title I Team

A new "[Road Map through the School Year](#)" will help schools plan and carry out high-impact family engagement strategies August through May.

Three interactive Power Points and handouts designed to build the capacity of school staff and families to work together for children's learning are also available:

- **Beyond Family Learning Nights: Grade-Level Parent Meetings**
- **Conferences: Building Relationships with Families**
- **Between the Open House and Parent-Teacher Conferences**

All are on the [DPI Title I Parent Involvement webpage](#).

Use Technology to Spur Family Partnerships

Schools are finding new ways to boost family engagement via technology, especially to communicate class-level and school-level news, to ask parents about their child, and to get to know students and families.

- [View](#) technology tips from teachers or a list of [ten ways](#) that technology can spur parent participation.
- Create “flipped classrooms for families” or short video segments that offer 24/7 access to content delivered directly from the teacher. [Read](#) a short article or [view](#) a graphic or video showing how a middle school science teacher uses a flipped classroom. Consider producing “five-minute flips for families,” explain important concepts families can reinforce at home.

USDE Releases New Family Engagement Framework

The U.S. Department of Education has developed a new framework to help schools work with families of diverse backgrounds and cultures, and to develop stronger partnerships around children’s learning. The Dual Capacity framework emphasizes the need for schools to build the capacity of adults – both staff and parents – in order to support student achievement and improve schools.

Staff prepared to engage in partnerships with families can:

- Honor and recognize families’ existing knowledge, skill, and forms of engagement.
- Sustain school and district cultures that welcome, invite, and promote family engagement.
- Connect all family engagement initiatives to student learning.

Learn more about the new framework at <http://www.ed.gov/family-and-community-engagement>.

Partnerships with Museums and Libraries Create Lifelong Learners

Urgent call to action in new report

Libraries and museums of all types can deliver critical early-learning resources to children and families, especially those most in need. In too many communities, museums and libraries are not “at the table” helping to craft the policies and practices that link children and their families to early learning resources, claims a report from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The report, ***Growing Young Minds: How Museums and Libraries Create Lifelong Learners***, urges communities to act promptly to leverage local learning resources that benefit all children, but especially for young children from vulnerable households. Among the report’s recommendations:

- **Communities can** help underserved, vulnerable families and children to access libraries and museums by offering free or reduced-fee public transportation.
- **Schools can** offer joint professional development to teachers, and museum and library staff to create a common understanding of instructional practices in schools and resources at museums and libraries.
- **Museums and libraries can** create links to schools that support local education priorities and policies, including the Common Core state standards.

For the full report, visit <http://www.ims.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/GrowingYoungMinds.pdf>

Important Dates for NNPS Members

From the National Network of Partnership Schools

Three deadlines are on the horizon for school and district members of the National Network of Partnership Schools:

- **May 15** is the deadline for members to submit a [Promising Partnership Practices](#) for the publication in the 2014 edition of this book.
- **June 30** is the deadline to submit [UPDATE forms](#) and renew NNPS membership.
- **June 30** is also the deadline to apply for an NNPS [Partnership Award](#) if your school or district has been a member of NNPS for two years or more.

This newsletter developed by DPI Title I Family Engagement Coordinator Ruth Anne Landsverk.

The **Wisconsin E-Brief for Partnership Schools** features news, events, research, and promising practices to keep Wisconsin schools and districts focused and moving forward on family-school-community partnerships for children's learning. You are receiving this e-brief because of your involvement in a partnership-related event or initiative sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Your comments, ideas, and stories are vital to this newsletter. Please tell us your achievements in promoting children's learning with families and community members, as well as your challenges and questions. Partnership practitioners learn most from each other, so **let's hear from you!**

Past editions of this newsletter are online at <http://fscp.dpi.wi.gov/>.

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